

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Improving watershed management across the state of California was the focus of a broad-based group of Californians who met together during four one-day forums between September 1999 and May 2000. Held at U.C. Davis, the forums invited diverse participants from the private and public sectors, and from all of the state's basins, to share ideas about opportunities and needs for a practical, collaborative, coordinated framework for watershed management in California – especially at the state and local levels.

Highlights of the **California Watershed Management Forums** included the following:

- ❖ People in a state as large and diverse as California can find commonality of ideas and principles for watershed management. A number of statements (64) were agreed upon as principles, state & local roles, accountability, and watershed definitions, such as:
  - ◆ Watershed management must integrate the needs and values of water quality, water quantity, flood plain management, ecosystems, and land use.
  - ◆ The State must think in terms of watershed boundaries instead of political ones to address its natural resource issues.
  - ◆ The Governor would provide the leadership to direct state agencies to coordinate at the state and local level.
  - ◆ The watershed approach works to build trust in order to develop solutions among all interests through a long-term process.
  - ◆ A state level framework should direct state assistance to local groups.
  - ◆ State staffs need to view local stakeholder-based watershed programs as being a significant factor in achieving their own agency goals.
- ❖ An initial outline for “a robust, collaborative” State framework for watershed management in California was developed by the participants and offered as a means for continued discussions.
  - ◆ Categories include: State Commitment, State Coordination, Agency Creativity, Staff Support, State Funding Support for Local Watershed Partners, and others.
- ❖ “12 Steps to Watershed Recovery”, a list of achievable steps to help accomplish a new State framework, was developed as a checklist for progress by the participants. The list's strength lies in the joint process in deriving the steps and in the joint (public/private) leadership and participation for carrying them out.
- ❖ California's Forum also served as a Regional Watershed Roundtable, along with 12 other regions in the nation. In June 2001, 25 selected delegates from the state will participate and share the Forum's results with the National Watershed Forum in Virginia.
- ❖ Participants intend to gather again in Spring 2001 to measure their progress on all of the above to help ensure success with California's watershed approach and its watershed partnership